

Peace baskets

Name: Twiyubake

Where: Muhanga district

When: Started in 2014

The seventeen members of Twiyubake (“Let’s build ourselves”) can regularly be found at the house of one of the cooperative’s members in Kibangu sector, Muhanga district. Every Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday the women meet here for a couple of hours to talk about their daily lives, and to fabricate the colourful peace baskets that are visible on the picture on the left.



All the members of Twiyubake have passed through a sociotherapy group in 2014. The women have varying backgrounds: some are widows (not all due to the genocide), others are single mothers, and again others face family conflict at their homes. After finishing sociotherapy, the members felt they still needed each other’s support and mutual understanding. As such, they continued to meet.

The idea soon arose among the former sociotherapy participants to start a cooperative together. In this way they could uphold the unity among them, and they could get some income. They considered farming or cultivation not profitable enough, as this was already omnipresent in their area, and renting a plot was very expensive. As some of the participants knew how to weave peace baskets, the women eventually started a basket cooperative. Those who did not know how to make the baskets, were taught by the ones who knew. In addition, the groups produces straw mats.

The peace baskets are made of strong straws and coloured dreads. The dreads are strongly wrapped around the straws. The thickness and shape of the baskets can be adjusted by adding or removing straws; the patterns in the baskets are made by using dreads of different colours. The baskets are mostly given away as wedding gifts. However, the women also sell them at some local markets, and at the market in Ruhango district.